

Message Text

PAGE 01 BANGKO 14026 071513Z

41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 033572

P R 071120Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 14026

EXDIS

CINCPAC PASS TO DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS

PERSONAL FROM AMBASSADOR UNGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TH

SUBJECT: THAI INTEREST IN MORE MILITARY AID

1. ON THE BASIS OF RECENT TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER THANOM AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT, I EXPECT THEY WILL SEEK FROM YOU DURING YOUR VISIT SOME COMMITMENT FOR ADDITIONAL US MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. THE THAI ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE DECLINE IN MAP APPROPRIATIONS FOR THAILAND, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN THEY SEE US FORCES DISENGAGING FROM THE AREA AND VIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA AS A CONTINUING THREAT TO THEIR SECURITY. THEY SEEM TO CONSIDER THAT THE DROP IN TOTAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND THE PROPOSALS PENDING IN CONGRESS FOR A CEILING ON THE THAI MAP CONFIRM THAT, AT THE SAME TIME THE U.S. IS REDUCING ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN SEA, IT IS ALSO CUTTING BACK ON THE AID THAILAND NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENSES AND BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT. THEIR CONCERN IS HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT THE INDOCHINA WAR, FAR FROM BEING OVER, IS AS THE THAI SEE IT STILL SERIOUS. PROSPECTS IN CAMBODIA ARE PARTICULARLY DISTURBING, AND EVEN IF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS ACHIEVED IN LAOS, PROSPECTS FOR REAL STABILITY THERE ARE HIGHLY
SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 14026 071513Z

QUESTIONABLE. MEANWHILE, THAILAND'S COMMUNIST INSURGENCY SEEMS TO BE HEATING UP WITH INCIDENTS IN AUGUST RUNNING 50 PER CENT ABOVE THE RATE OF AUGUST 1972.

3. WHILE THE THAI WANT TO STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET, THEY BELIEVE THEIR MILITARY FORCES ARE STILL DEFICIENT FOR WHAT THEY REGARD AS A GROWING THREAT IN INDOCHINA WHICH APPROACHES THEIR FRONTIERS IN CAMBODIA NOW AS WELL AS LAOS. THEY ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NIXON DOCTRINE BUT HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS NOW THAT THE U.S. WILL CARRY OUT ITS PART OF THIS CONCEPT AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE THEM TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

4. THANOM HAS PUBLICLY STATED THAT EACH OF THE MILITARY SERVICES IS DRAWING UP A LIST OF WHAT IT NEEDS, SO WE EXPECT TO BE PRESENTED IN DUE COURSE (PERHAPS DURING YOUR VISIT) WITH A SUBSTANTIAL SHOPPING LIST. DURING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT LAST FEBRUARY, THE THAI GAVE BRIGADIER GENERAL DUNN AN "INFORMAL REQUEST" FOR MILITARY AID OF \$225 MILLION PER ANNUM BEGINNING THIS FISCAL YEAR; THIS PROBABLY INDICATES THE DIMENSIONS THEY HAVE IN MIND, ALTHOUGH THE THAI ARE REALISTIC ENOUGH NOT TO EXPECT TO GET ANYWHERE NEAR THIS AMOUNT.

5. THE THAI LEADERSHIP ALSO BASES ITS CASE FOR SPECIAL U.S. ASSISTANCE ON THE ANALOGY THEY SEE BETWEEN THE U.S. REDEPLOYMENTS NOW BEGINNING IN THAILAND AND (A) THE WITHDRAWAL OF ONE U.S. DIVISION FROM KOREA, WHICH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY OUR PROMISE OF AN EXTENSIVE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR THE ROK FORCES, AND (B) U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM WHEN VAST QUANTITIES OF EQUIPMENT WERE LEFT BEHIND BY U.S. AND ALLIED FORCES FOR THE USE OF THE RVNAF. THEY UNDOUBTEDLY CONSIDER THAT THIS MAY BE THEIR LAST CHANCE TO OBTAIN FROM US THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT THEY DESIRE WHILE WE ARE DEPENDENT ON THE CONTINUED TENANCY OF THAI BASES TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS IN THE AREA.

6. I HAVE USED EVERY POSSIBLE OCCASION TO EXPLAIN THE CONSTANCY OF OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR THAI ALLIES AND OUR MORE GENERAL CONCERN WITH ENSURING STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WHILE ALSO ATTEMPTING TO DEFLATE THEIR EXPECTATIONS FOR NEW PROGRAMS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. I HAVE ALSO TAKEN PAINS TO KEEP THEM CURRENTLY INFORMED ON CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE BILLS. THEY WILL EXPECT YOU, AS A TOP LEVEL VISITOR FROM WASHINGTON, TO GIVE THEM
SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 14026 071513Z

FURTHER INSIGHTS INTO THE PROSPECTS FOR THAI MAP THIS YEAR AND THEY WILL HOPE FOR AND PROBABLY PRESS FOR MORE ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS THAN HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE THUS FAR.

7. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO GET THE THAI TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THEIR PRESENT ASSETS AND SHIFT MORE TO FMS, BUT AT LEAST AS LONG AS WE CONTINUE TO DEPEND ON THAI GEOGRAPHY AS THE BASE FOR OUR POSITION OF STRENGTH TO ENFORCE THE INDOCHINA PEACE SETTLEMENT, WE MUST TAKE LEGITIMATE THAI NEEDS INTO ACCOUNT AND DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP THEM AND THUS PRESERVE A COOPERATIVE ATMOSPHERE. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HAVE ASKED WHETHER WE COULD LEAVE BEHIND SOME OV-10 AIRCRAFT AS OUR AIR FORCE WITHDRAWS. THE THAI HAVE ALREADY PURCHASED TWO SQUADRONS OF OV-10'S UNDER FMS USING THEIR OWN FUNDS TO REPLACE

THEIR AGEING T-28 FIGHTERS. THE OV-10 HAS PROVED ITSELF USEFUL TO THE THAI FOR FORWARD AIR CONTROL AND CLOSE GROUND SUPPORT IN COMBATTING THE INSURGENCY. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THE USAF WANTS TO USE THESE LIGHT AIRCRAFT TO UPGRADE THEIR OWN SQUADRONS ELSEWHERE, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING SEVERAL SQUADRONS OF OV-10'S TO THE THAI AT AN APPROPRIATE STAGE OF FORCE REDUCTIONS. WE SHOULD ALSO BE THINKING IN TERMS OF MAKING SOME EXTRA EFFORTS TO FULFILL REQUESTS FOR THE OTHER SERVICES (SUCH AS LONG RANGE ARTILLERY AND PERSONNEL CARRIERS FOR THE ARMY) WHICH REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THAI SELF-DEFENSE AND COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS.

8. GIVEN THE REALITIES OF OUR BUDGETARY PROCESSES AND THE CURRENT REQUIREMENT THAT ALL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND BE CHARGED TO MAP, I HAVE STRESSED TO THE THAI LEADERS THAT THE SPECIFICS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXPLORED BETWEEN THE THAI ARMED FORCES AND MACTHAI SO THAT OUR MAP REQUESTS REFLECT THE RTG'S REAL CURRENT PRIORITIES. I HOPE YOU WILL FIND IT POSSIBLE TO BE FORTHCOMING IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TOP THAI OFFICIALS ALTHOUGH I RECOGNIZE THAT YOU MAY WELL BE IN NO POSITION TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENT ON SPECIFICS. I DO HOPE THAT YOUR VISIT HERE WILL GIVE YOU AN APPRECIATION OF THE SINCERITY OF OUR THAI FRIENDS SO THAT WE CAN COUNT ON YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT IN OUR EFFORTS TO GET THE AID THAT IS NECESSARY TO STRENGTHEN THAILAND'S DEFENSE AND KEEP THE THAI ON COURSE WITH US IN MAINTAINING A MEANINGFUL AMERICAN PRESENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

9. I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS WITH YOU FURTHER
SECRET

PAGE 04 BANGKO 14026 071513Z

DURING YOUR FORTHCOMING VISIT TO BANGKOK.
UNGER

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PRIME MINISTER, POLITICAL LEADERS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO14026
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750011-1353
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730963/abqcefy.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <27-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAI INTEREST IN MORE MILITARY AID
TAGS: MASS, TH
To: CINCPAC HONOLULU HI INFO STATE
SECDEF
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005